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MISCELLANEOUS. No. 10 (1916).

REPORT

BY THE

GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ON THE TREATMENT BY THE ENEMY OF BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR

REGARDING THE

CONDITIONS OBTAINING AT WITTENBERG CAMP DURING THE TYPHUS EPIDEMIC OF 1915.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
April 1916.

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Report by the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War regarding the Conditions obtaining at Wittenberg Camp during the Typhus Epidemic of 1915.

No. 1.

The Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 7.)

Sir, 18, *Carlton House Terrace, London, April* 6, 1916.

I HAVE the honour to state that the Chairman of this Committee, Mr. Justice Younger, has prepared the enclosed report on the conditions obtaining at Wittenberg camp during the typhus epidemic of last year.

The information upon which this report is based has been collected from prisoners of war repatriated from Wittenberg, and especially from Major Priestley, R.A.M.C., Captain Vidal, R.A.M.C., and Captain Lauder, R.A.M.C., who were sent to the camp soon after the outbreak of the epidemic and who were only recently released from Germany. The Committee considered it advisable to hold back the report until the evidence of these officers was available.

I am, &c.

ADELAIDE LIVINGSTONE, *Hon. Sec.*

Enclosure in No. 1.

Report on the Conditions obtaining at Wittenberg Camp during the Typhus Epidemic of 1915.

NOW that Major Priestley, R.A.M.C., Captain Vidal, R.A.M.C., and Captain Lauder, R.A.M.C., have been permitted to return to this country, after a prolonged detention in Germany still unexplained, the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War are in a position to submit for the consideration of His Majesty's Government their report upon the conditions of the camp at Wittenberg during and prior to the epidemic of typhus which devastated it in the first six months of 1915.

The Committee had already in the course of their enquiries gathered much detailed information as to the state of things which obtained at Wittenberg during the fever, but until the information in their possession could be checked, corrected, and supplemented by the personal testimony of the above three officers, the Committee refrained from making any report, so appalling did the conditions disclosed to them appear to be.

Major Priestley, Captain Vidal, and Captain Lauder are, it should at once be stated, the only survivors of the six sent by the German authorities to take up at Wittenberg Camp the place of duty abandoned by their own medical staff when the presence of typhus manifested itself amongst the prisoners under their charge.

These officers have now detailed their experiences to the Committee, who feel that a report upon the whole situation ought no longer to be withheld, although definiteness on points of detail may still be lacking by reason of the fact that the professional records of the epidemic and its incidents kept by Major Priestley, Captain Vidal, and Captain Lauder were taken from them before they were allowed to leave Germany, and that a promise made to Major Priestley and Captain Vidal that theirs would be returned to them after copies had been transcribed remains unfulfilled.

The Committee, however, have the less hesitation in deciding not to wait for records—which, in fact, may never become available—for the reason that the accounts

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of their experiences given by Major Priestley, Captain Vidal, and Captain Lauder fully confirm those statements in the possession of the Committee to which reference has already been made.

The camp at Wittenberg is built on a flat, sandy plain, devoid of trees or shrubs. The total area of the camp is about 10½ acres, and it is surrounded by the usual wire entanglements. It is subdivided into eight companies or compounds, intended to be separated from each other, but not so in practice. Every compound contains on an average six wooden bungalows, in which the men are housed, each bungalow in turn being divided into two compartments or barracks—originally constructed, it is believed, to accommodate 120 men. In fact, however, there were frequently, before and during the epidemic, 180 to 200 prisoners in a barrack, so that the overcrowding was most serious.

In the early stages of the war and during the fever the camp was very full. The British prisoners numbered between 700 and 800. There was a much larger number of French and Belgians, but the Russians always greatly preponderated over all the others. It is believed that before and during the progress of the typhus there were at least 15,000 prisoners in the camp, and there may have been as many as 16,000 or 17,000—an enormous population for so restricted an area as 10½ acres.

The winter of 1914–15 was extremely severe and the cold at Wittenberg intense, but the heating arrangements for the camp were altogether inadequate. Although there were two stoves to each bungalow, frequently during the winter there was a great shortage of fuel, while the stoves were so constructed that it was only if they were both constantly stoked with all the coal they could possibly hold that a bungalow was reasonably warmed. Often there was no coal for either stove, and the temperature was so low that the men had always to keep every window shut to husband what little warmth there was. This greatly aggravated the evil of the overcrowding above referred to.

Moreover, the men were insufficiently clothed. From most of the British prisoners their overcoats were taken on the day of their capture; none were given them in exchange. Their remaining clothes were often in rags; some of the men had even to use their blankets as clothing. Occasionally a prisoner had received a thin cotton shirt, but there were many with neither boots nor socks; many others had their feet wrapped in straw. They were provided with no change of underclothing, and there were no means of washing the scanty clothing they had, for, at that time, no washhouse existed in the camp. For personal ablutions there was only one trough or tap to each compound, and that was frequently frozen. No hot water was available except that which came from the cookhouse. As a consequence the state of the prisoners beggars description. Major Priestley found them gaunt, of a peculiar grey pallor and verminous. Their condition, in his own words, was deplorable.

The food with which they were supplied was bad and insufficient. The Committee are well aware that the difference between German food and cooking and that to which British soldiers are ordinarily accustomed induces prisoners to magnify deficiencies in this respect. But after every allowance on this head is made, the Committee are left with a record of suffering owing to the lack of wholesome food which they cannot but deplore. It was the men's food which was so bad and deficient. During the whole period the medical officers were well provided for at a price of 1·50 M. a day. There was no general scarcity, a fact which makes the treatment of the rank and file all the more difficult to justify or excuse.

When Major Priestley arrived at Wittenberg Camp the allowance of bread was 1 kilog. loaf for ten men. Breakfast for the men, he says, consisted of black (acorn ?) coffee and bread. The bread contained a high percentage of potato and was most unpalatable. Sometimes a thin soup was given for breakfast in place of coffee. The midday meal consisted of a soup made of potato flour, horsebeans, soja flour, some form of grease, and a minimum of meat. Men would go days without finding any meat in their bowl. Sometimes the midday soup contained a powerfully smelling sun-dried fish, at other times dried plums, &c. In the evening there was more thin soup containing margarine.

Before the outbreak there was a men's canteen at which bread and some other articles could be bought, but this was closed with the departure of the German guards on the outbreak of the typhus, and was not reopened until after their return when the epidemic was over.

Then the camp food improved, but since the month of May the English had become largely independent of it, for from that time they mainly subsisted on parcels sent them from home. No parcels, however, reached the camp until May, and the Committee are

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satisfied that the German food previously supplied was, apart from its bad quality, quite insufficient to maintain vitality or enable an ordinary man to resist disease.

And the spread of the typhus, when it came, was much facilitated by a camp regulation, not confined to Wittenberg, which enjoined that prisoners of all nationalities should be mixed together. Normally, there was only one mattress for every three prisoners, and every British prisoner was compelled to have one French and one Russian prisoner to share his mattress with him.

Now, typhus, as was fully recognised by the Russian doctors themselves, was unfortunately, to some extent—but through no fault of their own—latent amongst some of the Russian troops, and it is a well-known medical fact that lice are the great carriers of that disease, while it is, of course, notorious that the men of all armies in the field, including the British, are plagued with lice. As a protection against typhus, therefore, the separation of the infected was an elementary precaution. But at Wittenberg no adequate measures were taken even to free the prisoners, on their arrival at the camp, from the lice. The only provision for personal cleanliness there made for the men was one cupful of soft soap issued at intervals of many weeks to a room containing at least 120. In consequence, the men became increasingly verminous, and that condition, coupled with the cold and want of proper nourishment, was undoubtedly the principal inducing cause of the epidemic which supervened.

And the German authorities, although they were not ignorant of the danger, did nothing to prevent or minimise the spread of infection. That they knew it might become general throughout the camp is undoubted. German non-commissioned officers warned the French, shortly before the outbreak, of the risk, and, when during the course of the typhus, Captain Vidal, in order that its spread might be restricted as much as possible, asked a German officer, himself standing safely outside the camp, if the remaining healthy English could be placed together in one compound, his request was insultingly refused.

The medical and surgical arrangements were under the charge of Oberstabsarzt Dr. Aschenbach and his German assistants. At the outbreak of the epidemic there were no British medical officers at Wittenberg. There were a number of Russian and there may have been some French doctors; of this the Committee are not certain.

The epidemic broke out in December 1914. Thereupon the German staff, military and medical, precipitately left the camp, and thenceforth until the month of August 1915, with the exceptions detailed later on, no communication was held between the prisoners and their guards except by means of directions shouted from the guards or officers remaining outside the wire entanglements of the camp. All supplies for the men were pushed into the camp over chutes. The food for the hospital and medical officers was passed in on a trolley over about 20 yards of rail, worked by winches at either end so as to avoid all contact between the prisoners and the outside world. No medical attention during the whole time was provided by the German staff.

Of the happenings during the early weeks of the outbreak the information before the Committee is supplied by witnesses other than the medical officers who have recently returned, and accordingly the one observation the Committee make with regard to this period is that, when the typhus first appeared, the only hospital at the camp consisted of two wooden huts capable of holding about 100 patients, and that at the instance—as the Committee believe—of the Russian medical staff, the German authorities were induced to permit a part of compound No. 8 to be used for the purpose of an improvised hospital, the accommodation at the old hospital having already become quite inadequate.

The arrival of the British medical officers at the camp came about in the following way. From the month of November 1914, thirteen English doctors had been detained at Halle. They were none of them required for attendance upon their own men, and it is difficult to understand how, consistently with the Geneva Convention, their continued detention was justifiable. Indeed, in direct defiance of the provisions of that Convention, these doctors were treated as ordinary prisoners of war, and the Committee cannot resist the suspicion that they were deliberately detained by the German authorities so that they might be made available, if need be, for work of danger in relief of their own staff. Be that as it may, after three months' wrongful detention these doctors were, on the 10th February, 1915, informed that they were to be distributed amongst the other German camps, and particularly that six were required for the camp at Wittenberg. By arrangement amongst themselves the six sent there were Major Fry, Major Priestley, Captain Sutcliffe, Captain Field, Captain Vidal, and Captain—then Lieutenant —Lauder. No reason was given for the order that they should go to Wittenberg, and it was from the guard on the train that they first heard of typhus there.

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On arrival at Wittenberg they were marched to the camp. They visited the different compounds. They were received in apathetic silence. The rooms were unlighted; the men were aimlessly marching up and down; some were lying on the floor, probably sickening for typhus. When they got into the open air again Major Fry broke down. The horror of it all was more than he could for the moment bear. Later in the evening Major Priestley and Captain Vidal were directed to go to two temporary hospitals outside the camp, Major Priestley to the Kronprinz Hospital, and Captain Vidal to the Elbarfin Hospital. There were no infectious diseases at either hospital, and the general conditions at each were satisfactory. These officers were kept there until the 7th March, 1915.

Of the four officers left on the 11th February at the camp itself, Captain Lauder alone survives, and the conditions as he describes them during the period between the 11th February and the 7th March are full of horror. The wonder is that any prisoner escaped infection.

Captain Lauder found, for instance, that while in the bungalows there was normally one mattress to three men, in the improvised hospital there were no mattresses at all. This, of course, was known throughout the camp, and in consequence there were many typhus patients scattered over the compounds who were determined not to come into the hospital if they could help it. In one compound alone Captain Lauder discovered fifty hidden cases of typhus. Further, when a patient was brought from the compound to the hospital, either the mattress on which he had lain was brought with him or it was left behind in his bungalow. If it was brought with him his former companions were left without anything to sleep on; if it was left behind his still uninfected companions were left to sleep upon the infected mattress, and it was almost inevitable that they should catch the disease. Again, in the absence of stretchers, all the typhus cases had to be carried down to the hospital on the tables on which the men ate their food, and there was no possibility of washing these tables because, as above stated, there was practically no soap in the camp. Moreover, the German authorities at first refused to allow the whole of compound No. 8 to be used for typhus patients. They required that these should be mixed with other sufferers, a regulation for which it seems impossible to suggest any justification. The result simply was to spread the infection to those already afflicted in some other way.

During the first month the food ration for each patient was half a petit pain and half a cup of milk each per day. The only soup to be got was from the camp kitchen, but that came up in a wooden tub without a cover, and it arrived at the hospital—so one of the prisoners says—full of dust and dirt. It was hopeless diet for patients in a fever. In truth the ration was not a ration at all, it was a pretence. It was not even possible to give the patients warm water with their milk.

The camp conditions were too much for each of the four medical officers who were left there; two of them, Major Fry and Captain Sutcliffe, very soon sickened, and they died of typhus about a month after their arrival. Captain Field was attacked later by the disease and also died. There is no doubt in the minds of the committee that the condition to which the camp authorities had reduced the camp and the prisoners they had abandoned was directly responsible for the deaths of these devoted men. Lieutenant Lauder was finally stricken with the disease on the 7th March, after having for three days with a temperature due to typhus stuck to his work, there being no one then to take his place. He alone of the officers attacked finally recovered. When convalescent he bravely resumed his duty.

On the 7th March Major Priestley and Captain Vidal were directed to return to the main camp. They were met there by Captain Field. Major Fry and Captain Sutcliffe were then dying. Lieutenant Lauder, as above explained, was in the early stages of typhus.

Two Russian medical generals were in command in the hospital. There were then about 1,000 cases of typhus in the camp, and fresh cases were coming in at the rate of about 50, and sometimes more, a day. There were at that time about 150 British cases.

The British sick were lying scattered amongst the French and the Russians, both in the compound No. 8 and in the other compounds of the camp. Being sometimes dressed in French, Belgian, or Russian uniforms, they were difficult to recognise. They were lying in their clothes on the floor, or on the straw mattresses above described. In the beginning there were no beds in compound No. 8; there were not even, as has been shown, mattresses for all. Major Priestley saw delirious men waving arms brown to the elbow with fæcal matter. The patients were alive with vermin; in the half light he attempted to brush what he took to be an accumulation of dust from the folds of a

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patient's clothes, and he discovered it to be a moving mass of lice. In one room in compound No. 8 the patients lay so close to one another on the floor that he had to stand straddle-legged across them to examine them.

Captain Vidal's description is even more appalling. It was impossible, he says, to obtain bedpans for the British patients, and consequently in cases of delirium, and even in less serious cases, the state of the mattress was indescribable. Even such a thing as paper for sanitary purposes was almost unprocurable.

The difficulty in the way of obtaining sufficient drugs and dressings was for a long time extreme. Camphorated oil, Captain Lauder says, could never at Wittenberg, contrary to his experience in other German camps, be secured in adequate quantity, yet this was practically the only stimulant available. Day after day a list of medical requisites would be sent out, and only a third of the things requested would be supplied. Bed sores were common. In several cases toes or whole feet became gangrenous, and sufficient bandages were not available to dress them. One of the patients now returned to this country, Private Lutwyche of the 1st Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, had in May to have one leg amputated below the knee, and in July the other leg amputated at the same place, in both cases owing to gangrene. Had dressings at the proper time been available both feet would in all probability have been saved. And his case does not stand alone. The officers are quite satisfied that the *post* typhus gangrene, which was so common, was largely due to the fact that for so many patients there were neither socks nor anything else to keep their feet warm.

In the earlier stages of the epidemic there was practically no hospital clothing available for the British prisoners. There was only a small sulphur chamber for disinfecting purposes. When a patient's outer clothing was taken off to be sent to the disinfector he had to be left in his shirt, as no other clothing or shirts were supplied. Each patient brought his blankets from the camp with him, and as no covering could be provided for him while disinfection was taking place it was impossible adequately to disinfect his clothing unless he was to be left naked.

As regards the washing of patients in hospital, this was entirely out of the question. Until a supply of soap was obtained by Captain Vidal's efforts from England at a later date there was no soap forthcoming. The only supply was a small quantity secured from the officers' canteen, and that was kept for the very worst cases.

It was to Major Priestley's great powers of organisation, the devoted labours and strong personality of Captain Vidal and, after his recovery, the splendid work of Captain Lauder, that gradual improvement in the conditions was due. An observation ward was instituted in compound No. 8 and placed in charge of Captain Lauder. Major Priestley took over the treatment of typhus in the hospital, and Captain Vidal, in addition to other duties, was placed in charge of the surgical ward. Major Priestley at length obtained permission to collect, and he did collect, all the British typhus patients in one bungalow of that compound. He secured for his patients what bedding, hospital clothing, urinals, &c., he could, as these filtered daily from the hands of the Germans outside into the storeroom. He arranged that the milk and the soup should arrive in special vessels before the bungalow; he obtained for each patient about three cupfuls of milk per day, and for the convalescents a thin soup and some white rolls. Clothing, beds, and bedding, were gradually collected, so that the patients could at least be put into clean clothes, and their own were disinfected in a movable steam disinfector that after a time was working. As the cases decreased in number the appalling overcrowding of the hospital in the beginning at length disappeared.

In all this work Major Priestley, Captain Vidal, and Captain Lauder were splendidly supported by the many English prisoners who volunteered as nurses. Many of these devoted men caught the infection and died of the fever.

On one occasion only during the whole course of the epidemic did Dr. Aschenbach enter the hospital, or even the camp. His visit took place about four weeks after Major Priestley's arrival, and after some kind of order had been evolved. He came attired in a complete suit of protective clothing, including a mask and rubber gloves. His inspection was brief and rapid.

For his services in combating the epidemic, Dr. Aschenbach, the Committee understand, has been awarded the Iron Cross.

Some of the German guards outside the camp were infected by prisoners to whom, contrary to orders, they persisted in selling things. These men were placed by the Germans in a hospital outside the camp, and one of the German medical staff, an Alsatian as it happened, was sent to attend them. At a later stage in the outbreak this young man came to the hospital, but simply to take bacteriological specimens for research work at Magdeburg. He helped in no way.

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With these exceptions no visit was paid to the camp during the whole outbreak by any member of the German Medical Service.

The dead were buried in a cemetery formed out of a part of the camp. The Germans sent in a certain number of coffins every day, into which the bodies of the dead were put and carried out by their comrades through a gate in the barbed wire. There was not sufficient room for burial of so many, and the coffins were piled one upon another, but the Committee do not think there was any special danger in the arrangement. What the prisoners found hardest to bear in this matter were the jeers with which the coffins were frequently greeted by the inhabitants of Wittenberg, who stood outside the wire and were permitted to insult their dead.

During the first two months the typhus was hæmorrhagic typhus; it was of a milder type later on.

There were between 250 and 300 English cases, and there were 60 deaths amongst them. The deaths amongst the French and the Russians were, of course, much greater in number. The medical officers and the nursing orderlies suffered the most severely; the mortality among them was high.

The cases of post-typhus gangrene were very numerous, largely the result, in all probability, of the inadequate heating of the wards at night, and, as above stated, of insufficient covering.

It was, in the earlier days, often necessary to discharge the patients from hospital before they were fit to be removed. Some were hardly able to walk, but it was essential to make room for fresh patients, whose need was greater.

In many cases these men had to go back to their barrack room and lie on the bare floor, as no fresh beds or mattresses were provided for a long time, and the mattresses taken by them into the hospital had to be destroyed owing to the state in which they were.

Captain Vidal says that the conditions were thoroughly realised by the German authorities without any effort being made by them to bring about an improvement. Representations, usually through the French and Russian doctors, owing to the marked hostility which was always manifested towards the English by the camp authorities, were again and again addressed to the senior medical officer, but usually without result.

After the middle of April, however, beds and clothing were, as above appears, gradually obtained for the hospital, and as the weather became warmer the cases rapidly decreased in number. With the decrease in the patients the supplies became adequate, so that now every patient in the Wittenberg hospital, whatever his ailment, has a bed and proper hospital clothing.

The last English typhus case occurred in the middle of May, the last Russian case in July.

By the end of July all cases were convalescent, except those suffering from post-typhus gangrene.

During the epidemic an adequate steriliser for clothes was built outside the camp by the Germans, but the work was not pressed, and it was not ready for use until a fortnight after the last case of typhus occurred amongst the British. Its presence there now will, however, probably prevent any recurrence of the epidemic.

In May also several new hospital bungalows were built behind the wire entanglements, which were then moved back so as to surround them.

Each of these bungalows has three stoves, and in them beds are provided with wood-shaving mattresses, sheets, blankets, and pillows.

Unfortunately the epidemic was over before these bungalows became available.

As is obvious from this report, the conditions of the camp was such that it was not possible for the American Ambassador or his staff to visit it until after many months. It was, however, visited by Mr. Lithgow-Osborne on the 29th October, and by Mr. Gerard himself and Mr. Russell on the 8th November, and their reports are on record.

All accounts before the Committee testify to the great further improvements in the camp and its management effected by the Germans as a result of these visits.

The Committee fully recognise that at the beginning of the war, when the sudden, and it may have been unexpected, rush of Russian prisoners overwhelmed the authorities, every allowance must be made for defects of all kinds in prison camps, many of them hastily improvised. They have accordingly looked in every direction to see whether any justification or excuse can be suggested for the treatment to which these Wittenberg prisoners were subjected during the period of their visitation. They can find none.

Outside the camp the Committee can discover no indication of any scarcity, either

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of food or of medical or surgical appliances, which could account for the failure of the German authorities to supply their sick prisoners with a sufficiency of both.

At the Kronprinz Hospital and at the Elbarfin Hospital as early as February the supply of medical requisites was adequate. As has been stated, the medical officers in the camp were throughout the epidemic amply provided with food at an extremely moderate price and apparently without difficulty. After the outbreak had spent itself and the German guards had returned to the camp, Major Priestley and Captain Vidal were on several occasions allowed to visit the town of Wittenberg under escort, and even during that period they found displayed there abundant supplies of every requisite.

Yet for months the plague-stricken camp was starved of the barest necessaries of existence and of the simplest drugs, and was not even provided with surgical dressings for the patients' wounds.

The Committee are therefore compelled to look elsewhere for an explanation of the criminal neglect of which, as it seems to them, the German authorities were guilty. And they find it in the history of the administration of the Wittenberg Camp from the very commencement. Incredible as it may seem, the action of the officers and guards in precipitately deserting the camp and thenceforth controlling its caged inmates with loaded rifles from the outside, was only in keeping with the methods and conduct of these men throughout.

The cruelty of the administration at Wittenberg Camp from the very commencement has become notorious. Savage dogs were habitually employed to terrorise the prisoners; flogging with a rubber whip was frequent; men were struck with little or no provocation, and were tied to posts with their arms above their heads for hours. Captain Lauder reports that many of these men went so far as to look upon the typhus, with all its horrors, as a godsend; they preferred it to the presence of the German guards.

And the callousness during the outbreak even of so prominent an officer as Dr. Aschenbach is illustrated by an incident related by Captain Lauder. Shortly after their arrival at the camp, Major Fry, with Captain Lauder, was begging Dr. Aschenbach, standing outside the entanglements, for some medical requisite urgently required. One of his staff with Dr. Aschenbach was apparently favourably inclined towards the request, but it was curtly refused by Dr. Aschenbach, who turned away with the words "Schweine Engländer."

To the Committee an incident like that, with all it implies, speaks volumes.

The effects of such methods as have been described were manifest even on the th October, 1915, when, as has been stated, Mr. Lithgow-Osborne visited the camp. In his report of that visit, after remarking that the authorities of the camp regard their prisoners as criminals whom fear alone keeps obedient, Mr. Osborne proceeds:—

> "In no other camp have I found signs of fear on the part of the prisoners that what they might say to me would result in suffering to them afterwards";

and Mr. Gerard speaking of his visit on the 8th November says:—

> "The impression gained after careful examination of the camp and long conversations with the prisoners was even more unfavourable than I had been led to expect."

The Committee accordingly are forced to the conclusion that the terrible sufferings and privations of the afflicted prisoners during the period under review are directly chargeable to the deliberate cruelty and neglect of the German officials whose elementary duty it was, in the words of the Geneva Convention, to respect and take care of these men, wounded and sick as they were, without distinction of nationality, but who acted as if neither that convention nor even the ordinary instincts of humanity had any place in their scheme of things.

The commandant during the whole time was General von Dassel. The Committee believe that he has now been removed from a position which he always was unfitted to occupy. Dr. Aschenbach, however, remains medical officer, and while the Committee recognise that the material conditions at the camp are now not unsatisfactory, that improvement is the result of constant pressure which ought never to have been necessary, and no confidence can be felt that so long as Dr. Aschenbach is there the prisoners will have the medical care to which they are entitled. It is a serious matter, as the Committee think, that the German authorities should still retain in such a position of responsibility, and it is outrageous that they should have decorated an officer capable of such neglect as that for which Dr. Aschenbach must one day answer.

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The Committee turn to a more agreeable topic when they draw attention, if they properly may, to the splendid work of the British Medical Staff and orderlies during the epidemic. Major Priestley's work has already been referred to in this report: it was beyond all praise. Captain Vidal was, in the words of one of the prisoners, the idol of the camp; and Major Priestley says of Captain Lauder that he cannot sufficiently express his admiration for his pluck and skill and for the unobtrusive way in which he did his duty. It was he who, at the beginning, bore the brunt of the outbreak.

The Committee have seen Captain Lauder as well as the other officers, and they feel sure that he fully deserves that high tribute.

And all these officers concur in praising the splendid bearing of the orderlies. They each of them volunteered for the work; they tended prisoners of all nationalities. They all of them with full understanding, for they were all warned, risked their lives without a thought, and many of them died at their post. The Committee hope to be able in due course to supply His Majesty's Government with a full list of these heroic souls.

The Committee feel that every one of these officers and men as truly offered his life for the sake of others as any soldier on the battlefield, and they venture to hope that the devoted service of such of them as survive will be duly remembered at the proper time.

On behalf of the Government Committee
on the Treatment by the Enemy of
British Prisoners of War:

ROBERT YOUNGER, *Chairman.*

April 6, 1916.

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MISCELLANEOUS. No. 10 (1916).

REPORT by the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War regarding the Conditions obtaining at Wittenberg Camp during the Typhus Epidemic of 1915.

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